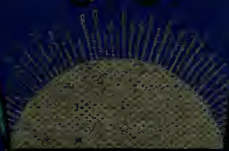


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THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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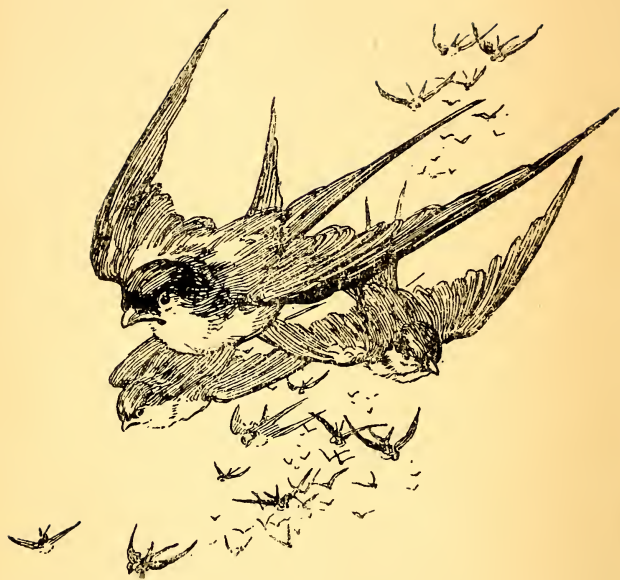
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THE MERCHANT OF VENICE:
AND OTHER STORIES.





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CHOOSING THE CASKET

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE,

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY
E. NESBIT
AND
HUGH CHESSON.

ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANCES BRUNDAGE, M. BOWLEY,
Etc., etc.



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relieving the wants of his friends, among whom his relation, Bassanio, held the first place.

Now Bassanio, like many another gay and gallant gentleman, was reckless and extravagant, and finding that he had not only come to the end of his fortune, but was also unable to pay his creditors, he went to Antonio for further help.

“To you, Antonio,” he said, “I owe the most in money and in love: and I have thought of a plan to pay everything I owe if you will but help me.”

“Say what I can do, and it shall be done,” answered his friend.

Then said Bassanio, “In Belmont is a lady richly left, and from all quarters of the globe renowned suitors come to woo her, not only because she is rich, but because she is beautiful and good as well. She looked on me with such favour when last we met, that I feel

sure that I should win her away from all rivals for her love had I but the means to go to Belmont, where she lives."

"All my fortunes," said Antonio, "are at sea, and so I have no ready money; but luckily my credit is good in Venice, and I will borrow for you what you need."

There was living in Venice at this time a rich money-lender, named Shylock. Antonio despised and disliked this man very much, and treated him with the greatest harshness and scorn. He would thrust him, like a cur, over his threshold, and would even spit on him. Shylock submitted to all these indignities with a patient shrug; but deep in his heart he cherished a desire for revenge on the rich, smug merchant. For Antonio both hurt his pride and injured his business. "But for him," thought Shylock, "I should

be richer by half a million ducats. On the market place, and wherever he can, he denounces the rate of interest I charge, and—worse than that—he lends out money freely.”

So when Bassanio came to him to ask for a loan of three thousand ducats to Antonio for three months, Shylock hid his hatred, and turning to Antonio, said—“Harshly as you have treated me, I would be friends with you and have your love. So I will lend you the money and charge you no interest. But, just for fun, you shall sign a bond in which it shall be agreed that if you do not repay me in three months’ time, then I shall have the right to a pound of your flesh, to be cut from what part of your body I choose.”

“No,” cried Bassanio to his friend, “you shall run no such risk for me.”

“Why, fear not,” said Antonio, “my



ships will be home a month before the time. I will sign the bond."

Thus Bassanio was furnished with the

means to go to Belmont, there to woo the lovely Portia. The very night he started, the money - lender's pretty daughter, Jessica, ran away from her father's house with her lover, and she took with her from her father's hoards some bags of ducats and precious stones. Shylock's grief and anger were terrible to see. His love for her changed to hate. "I would she were dead at my feet and the jewels in her ear," he cried. His only comfort now was in hearing of the serious losses which had befallen Antonio, some of whose ships were wrecked. "Let him look to his bond," said Shylock, "let him look to his bond."

Meanwhile Bassanio had reached Belmont, and had visited the fair Portia. He found, as he had told Antonio, that the rumour of her wealth and beauty had drawn to her suitors from far and near. But to all of them Portia had

but one reply. She would only accept that suitor who would pledge himself to abide by the terms of her father's will. These were conditions that frightened away many an ardent wooer. For he who would win Portia's heart and hand, had to guess which of three caskets held her portrait. If he guessed aright, then Portia would be his bride; if wrong, then he was bound by oath never to reveal which casket he chose, never to marry, and to go away at once.

The caskets were of gold, silver, and lead. The gold one bore this inscription:—"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire"; the silver one had this:—"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves"; while on the lead one were these words:—"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath." The Prince of Morocco, as brave as he was black,

was among the first to submit to this test. He chose the gold casket, for he said neither base lead nor silver could contain her picture. So he chose the gold casket, and found inside the likeness of what many men desire—death.

After him came the haughty Prince of Arragon, and saying, "Let me have what I deserve—surely I deserve the lady," he chose the silver one, and found inside a fool's head. "Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?" he cried.

Then at last came Bassanio, and Portia would have delayed him from making his choice from very fear of his choosing wrong. For she loved him dearly, even as he loved her. "But," said Bassanio, "let me choose at once, for, as I am, I live upon the rack."

Then Portia bade her servants to bring music and play while her gallant lover made his choice. And Bassanio took



the oath and walked up to the caskets—the musicians playing softly the while. “Mere outward show,” he said, “is to be despised. The world is still deceived with ornament, and so no gaudy gold or shining silver for me. I choose the lead casket; joy be the consequence!”

And opening it, he found fair Portia's portrait inside, and he turned to her and asked if it were true that she was his.

"Yes," said Portia, "I am yours, and this house is yours, and with them I give you this ring, from which you must never part."

And Bassanio, saying that he could hardly speak for joy, found words to swear that he would never part with the ring while he lived.

Then suddenly all his happiness was dashed with sorrow, for messengers came from Venice to tell him that Antonio was ruined, and that Shylock demanded from the Duke the fulfilment of the bond, under which he was entitled to a pound of the merchant's flesh. Portia was as grieved as Bassanio to hear of the danger which threatened his friend.

"First," she said, "take me to church

and make me your wife, and then go to Venice at once to help your friend. You shall take with you money enough to pay his debt twenty times over."

But when her newly-made husband had gone, Portia went after him, and arrived in Venice disguised as a lawyer, and with an introduction from a celebrated lawyer Bellario, whom the Duke of Venice had called in to decide the legal questions raised by Shylock's claim to a pound of Antonio's flesh. When the Court met, Bassanio offered Shylock twice the money borrowed, if he would withdraw his claim. But the money-lender's only answer was—

"If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them,—I would have my bond."

It was then that Portia arrived in her disguise, and not even her own husband knew her. The Duke gave her welcome on account of the great Bellario's

introduction, and left the settlement of the case to her. Then in noble words she bade Shylock have mercy. But he was deaf to her entreaties. "I will have the pound of flesh," was his reply.

"What have you to say?" asked Portia of the merchant.

"But little," he answered; "I am armed and well prepared."

"The Court awards you a pound of Antonio's flesh," said Portia to the money-lender.

"Most righteous judge!" cried Shylock. "A sentence; come, prepare."

"Tarry a little. This bond gives you no right to Antonio's blood, only to his flesh. If, then, you spill a drop of his blood, all your property will be forfeited to the State. Such is the Law."

And Shylock, in his fear, said, "Then I will take Bassanio's offer."



JESSICA LEAVING HOME.

“No,” said Portia sternly, “you shall have nothing but your bond. Take your pound of flesh, but remember, that if you take more or less, even by the weight of a hair, you will lose your property and your life.”

Shylock now grew very much frightened. “Give me my three thousand ducats that I lent him, and let him go.”

Bassanio would have paid it to him, but said Portia, “No! He shall have nothing but his bond.”

“You, a foreigner,” she added, “have sought to take the life of a Venetian citizen, and thus by the Venetian law, your life and goods are forfeited. Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.”

Thus were the tables turned, and no mercy would have been shown to Shylock, had it not been for Antonio. As it was, the money-lender forfeited half his fortune to the State, and he had to settle

the other half on his daughter's husband, and with this he had to be content.

Bassanio, in his gratitude to the clever lawyer, was induced to part with the ring his wife had given him, and with which he had promised never to part, and when on his return to Belmont he confessed as much to Portia, she seemed very angry, and vowed she would not be



friends with him until she had her ring again. But at last she told him that it was she who, in the disguise of the lawyer, had saved his friend's life, and got the ring from him. So Bassanio was forgiven, and made happier than ever, to know how rich a prize he had drawn in the lottery of the caskets.





TIMON OF ATHENS.

FOUR hundred years before the birth of Christ, a man lived in Athens whose generosity was not only great, but absurd. He was very rich, but no worldly wealth was enough for a man who spent and gave like Timon. If anybody gave Timon a horse, he

received from Timon twenty better horses. If anybody borrowed money of Timon and offered to repay it, Timon was offended. If a poet had written a poem and Timon had time to read it, he would be sure to buy it; and a painter had only to hold up his canvas in front of Timon to receive double its market price.

Flavius, his steward, looked with dismay at his reckless mode of life. When Timon's house was full of noisy lords drinking and spilling costly wine, Flavius would sit in a cellar and cry. He would say to himself, "There are ten thousand candles burning in this house, and each of those singers braying in the concert-room costs a poor man's yearly income a night"; and he would remember a terrible thing said by Apemantus, one of his master's friends, "O what a number of men eat Timon, and Timon sees them not!"

Of course, Timon was much praised.

A jeweller who sold him a diamond pretended that it was not quite perfect till Timon wore it. "You mend the jewel by wearing it," he said. Timon gave the diamond to a lord called Sempronius, and the lord exclaimed, "O, he's the very soul of bounty." "Timon is infinitely dear to me," said another lord, called Lucullus, to whom he gave a beautiful horse; and other Athenians paid him compliments as sweet.

But when Apemantus had listened to some of them, he said, "I'm going to knock out an honest Athenian's brains."

"You will die for that," said Timon.

"Then I shall die for doing nothing," said Apemantus. And now you know what a joke was like four hundred years before Christ.

This Apemantus was a frank despiser of mankind, but a healthy one, because he was not unhappy. In this mixed

world anyone with a number of acquaintances knows a person who talks bitterly of men, but does not shun them, and boasts that he is never deceived by their fine speeches, and is inwardly cheerful and proud. Apemantus was a man like that.

Timon, you will be surprised to hear, became much worse than Apemantus, after the dawning of a day which we call Quarter Day.

Quarter Day is the day when bills pour in. The grocer, the butcher, and the baker are all thinking of their debtors on that day, and the wise man has saved enough money to be ready for them. But Timon had not; and he did not only owe money for food. He owed it for jewels and horses and furniture; and, worst of all, he owed it to money-lenders, who expected him to pay twice as much as he had borrowed.

Quarter Day is a day when promises



to pay are scorned, and on that day Timon was asked for a large sum of money. "Sell some land," he said to his steward. "You have no land," was the reply. "Nonsense! I had a hundred thousand acres," said Timon. "You could have spent the price of the world if you had possessed it," said Flavius.

“Borrow some then,” said Timon ;
“try Ventidius.” He thought of Ventidius because he had once got Ventidius out of prison by paying a creditor of this young man. Ventidius was now rich. Timon trusted in his gratitude. But not for all ; so much did he owe ! Servants were despatched with requests for loans of money to several friends.

One servant (Flaminius) went to Lucullus. When he was announced Lucullus said, “A gift, I warrant. I dreamt of a silver jug and basin last night.” Then, changing his tone, “How is that honourable, free-hearted, perfect gentleman, your master, eh ?”

“Well in health, sir,” replied Flaminius.

“And what have you got there under your cloak ?” asked Lucullus, jovially.

“Faith, sir, nothing but an empty box, which, on my master’s behalf, I beg you to fill with money, sir.”

“La! la! la!” said Lucullus, who could not pretend to mean, “Ha! ha! ha!” “Your master’s one fault is that he is too fond of giving parties. I’ve warned him that it was expensive. Now, look here, Flaminius, you know this is no time to lend money without security, so suppose you act like a good boy and tell him that I was not at home. Here’s three solidares for yourself.”

“Back, wretched money,” cried Flaminius, “to him who worships you!”

Others of Timon’s friends were tried and found stingy. Amongst them was Sempronius.

“Hum,” he said to Timon’s servant, “has he asked Ventidius? Ventidius is beholden to him.”

“He refused.”

“Well, have you asked Lucullus?”

“He refused.”

“A poor compliment to apply to me last of all,” said Sempronius, in affected anger. “If he had sent to me at first, I would gladly have lent him money, but I’m not going to be such a fool as to lend him any now.”

“Your lordship makes a good villain,” said the servant.

When Timon found that his friends were so mean, he took advantage of a lull in his storm of creditors to invite Ventidius and Company to a banquet. Flavius was horrified, but Ventidius and Company were not in the least ashamed, and they assembled accordingly in Timon’s house, and said to one another that their princely host had been jesting with them.

“I had to put off an important engagement in order to come here,” said Lucullus; “but who could refuse Timon?”

“It was a real grief to me to be



without ready money when he asked for some," said Sempronius.

"The same here," chimed in a third lord.

Timon now appeared, and his guests

vied with one another in apologies and compliments. Inwardly sneering, Timon was gracious to them all.

In the banqueting hall was a table resplendent with covered dishes. Mouths watered. These summer-friends loved good food.

"Be seated, worthy friends," said Timon. He then prayed aloud to the gods of Greece. "Give each man enough," he said, "for if you, who are our gods, were to borrow of men they would cease to adore you. Let men love the joint more than the host. Let every score of guests contain twenty villains. Bless my friends as much as they have blessed me. Uncover the dishes, dogs, and lap!"

The hungry lords were too much surprised by this speech to resent it. They thought Timon was unwell, and, although he had called them dogs, they uncovered the dishes.

There was nothing in them but warm water.

“May you never see a better feast,” wished Timon. “I wash off the flatteries with which you plastered me and sprinkle you with your villainy.” With these words he threw the water into his guests’ faces, and then he pelted them with the dishes. Having thus ended the banquet, he went into an outhouse, seized a spade, and quitted Athens for ever.

His next dwelling was a cave near the sea.

Of all his friends, the only one who had not refused him aid was a handsome soldier named Alcibiades, and he had not been asked because, having quarrelled with the Government of Athens, he had left that town. The thought that Alcibiades might have proved a true friend did not soften Timon’s bitter feeling. He was too weak-minded to

discern the fact that good cannot be far from evil in this mixed world. He determined to see nothing better in all mankind than the ingratitude of Ventidius and the meanness of Lucullus.

He became a vegetarian, and talked pages to himself as he dug in the earth for food.

One day, when he was digging for roots near the shore, his spade struck gold. If he had been a wise man he would have enriched himself quickly, and returned to Athens to live in comfort. But the sight of the gold vein gave no joy but only scorn to Timon. "This yellow slave," he said, "will make and break religions. It will make black white and foul fair. It will buy murder and bless the accursed."

He was still ranting when Alcibiades, now an enemy of Athens, approached with his soldiers and two beautiful

women who cared for nothing but pleasure.

Timon was so changed by his bad thoughts and rough life that Alcibiades did not recognise him at first.

“Who are you?” he asked.

“A beast, as you are,” was the reply.

Alcibiades knew his voice, and offered him help and money. But Timon would none of it, and began to insult the women. They, however, when they found he had discovered a gold mine, cared not a jot for his opinion of them, but said, “Give us some gold, good Timon. Have you more?”

With further insults, Timon filled their aprons with gold ore.

“Farewell,” said Alcibiades, who deemed that Timon’s wits were lost; and then his disciplined soldiers left without profit the mine which could have paid their wages, and marched towards Athens.

Timon continued to dig and curse, and affected great delight when he dug up a root and discovered that it was not a grape.

Just then Apemantus appeared. "I am told that you imitate me," said Apemantus.

"Only," said Timon, "because you haven't a dog which I can imitate."

"You are revenging yourself on your friends by punishing yourself," said Apemantus. "That is very silly, for they live just as comfortably as they ever did. I am sorry that a fool should imitate me."

"If I were like you," said Timon, "I should throw myself away."

"You have done so," sneered Apemantus. "Will the cold brook make you a good morning drink, or an east wind warm your clothes as a valet would?"

"Off with you!" said Timon; but Apemantus stayed a while longer and



told him he had a passion for extremes, which was true. Apemantus even made a pun, but there was no good laughter to be got out of Timon.

Finally, they lost their temper like two schoolboys, and Timon said he was

sorry to lose the stone which he flung at Apemantus, who left him with an evil wish.

This was almost an "at-home" day for Timon, for when Apemantus had departed, he was visited by some robbers. They wanted gold.

"You want too much," said Timon. "Here are water, roots and berries."

"We are not birds and pigs," said a robber.

"No, you are cannibals," said Timon. "Take the gold, then, and may it poison you! Henceforth rob one another."

He spoke so frightfully to them that, though they went away with full pockets, they almost repented of their trade.

His last visitor on that day of visits was his good steward Flavius. "My dearest master!" cried he.

"Away! What are you?" said Timon.

“Have you forgotten me, sir?” asked Flavius, mournfully.

“I have forgotten all men,” was the reply; “and if you’ll allow that you are a man, I have forgotten you.”

“I was your honest servant,” said Flavius.

“Nonsense! I never had an honest man about me,” retorted Timon.

Flavius began to cry.

“What! shedding tears?” said Timon. “Come nearer, then. I will love you because you are a woman, and unlike men, who only weep when they laugh or beg.”

They talked awhile; then Timon said, “Yon gold is mine. I will make you rich, Flavius, if you promise me to live by yourself and hate mankind. I will make you very rich if you promise me that you will see the flesh slide off the beggar’s bones before you

feed him, and let the debtor die in gaol before you pay his debt."

Flavius simply said, "Let me stay to comfort you, my master."

"If you dislike cursing, leave me," replied Timon, and he turned his back on Flavius, who went sadly back to Athens, too much accustomed to obedience to force his services upon his ailing master.

The steward had accepted nothing, but a report got about that a mighty nugget of gold had been given him by his former master, and Timon therefore received more visitors. They were a painter and a poet, whom he had patronised in his prosperity.

"Hail, worthy Timon!" said the poet. "We heard with astonishment how your friends deserted you. No whip's large enough for their backs!"

"We have come," put in the painter, "to offer our services."

"You've heard that I have gold," said Timon.

"There was a report," said the painter, blushing; "but my friend and I did not come for that."

"Good honest men!" jeered Timon. "All the same, you shall have plenty of gold if you will rid me of two villains."

"Name them," said his two visitors in one breath.

"Both of you!" answered Timon. Giving the painter a whack with a big stick, he said, "Put that into your palette and make money out of it." Then he gave a whack to the poet, and said, "Make a poem out of that and get paid for it. There's gold for you."

They hurriedly withdrew.

Finally Timon was visited by two senators who, now that Athens was threatened by Alcibiades, desired to

have on their side this bitter noble whose gold might help the foe.

“Forget your injuries,” said the first senator. “Athens offers you dignities whereby you may honourably live.”

“Athens confesses that your merit was overlooked, and wishes to atone, and more than atone, for her forgetfulness,” said the second senator.

“Worthy senators,” replied Timon, in his grim way, “I am almost weeping; you touch me so! All I need are the eyes of a woman and the heart of a fool.”

But the senators were patriots. They believed that this bitter man could save Athens, and they would not quarrel with him. “Be our captain,” they said, “and lead Athens against Alcibiades, who threatens to destroy her.”

“Let him destroy the Athenians too, for all I care,” said Timon; and seeing



an evil despair in his face, they left him.

The senators returned to Athens, and soon afterwards trumpets were

blown before its walls. Upon the walls they stood and listened to Alcibiades, who told them that wrong-doers should quake in their easy chairs. They looked at his confident army, and were convinced that Athens must yield if he assaulted it, therefore they used the voice that strikes deeper than arrows.

"These walls of ours were built by the hands of men who never wronged you, Alcibiades," said the first senator.

"Enter," said the second senator, "and slay every tenth man, if your revenge needs human flesh."

"Spare the cradle," said the first senator.

"I ask only justice," said Alcibiades. "If you admit my army, I will inflict the penalty of your own laws upon any soldier who breaks them."

At that moment a soldier approached Alcibiades, and said, "My noble general, Timon is dead." He handed Alcibiades

a sheet of wax, saying, "He is buried by the sea, on the beach, and over his grave is a stone with letters on it which I cannot read, and therefore I have impressed them on wax."

Alcibiades read from the sheet of wax this couplet—

"Here lie I, Timon, who, alive, all living men
did hate.

Pass by and say your worst; but pass, and
stay not here your gait."

"Dead, then, is noble Timon," said Alcibiades; and he entered Athens with an olive branch instead of a sword.

So it was one of Timon's friends who was generous in a greater matter than Timon's need; yet are the sorrow and rage of Timon remembered as a warning lest another ingratitude should arise to turn love into hate.



THE COMEDY OF ERRORS.

ÆGEON was a merchant of Syracuse, which is a seaport in Sicily. His wife was Æmilia, and they were very happy until Ægeon's manager died, and he was obliged to go by himself to a place called Epidamnum on the Adriatic. As soon as she could Æmilia followed him, and after they had been together some time two baby boys were born to them. The babies were exactly alike; even when they were dressed differently they looked the same.

And now you must believe a very strange thing. At the same inn where these children were born, and on the same day, two baby boys were born to a much poorer couple than Æmilia and Ægeon; so poor, indeed, were the parents of these twins that they sold them to the parents of the other twins.

Æmilia was eager to show her children to her friends in Syracuse, and in treacherous weather she and Ægeon and the four babies sailed homewards. They were still far from Syracuse when their ship sprang a leak, and the crew left it in a body by the only boat, caring little what became of their passengers.

Æmilia fastened one of her children to a mast and tied one of the slave-children to him; Ægeon followed her example with the remaining children. Then the parents secured themselves to the same masts, and hoped for safety.

The ship, however, suddenly struck a

rock and was split in two, and Æmilia, and the two children whom she had tied, floated away from Ægeon and the other children. Æmilia and her charges were picked up by some people of Epidamnum, but some fishermen of Corinth took the babies from her by force, and she returned to Epidamnum alone, and very miserable. Afterwards she settled in Ephesus, a famous town in Asia Minor.

Ægeon and his charges were also saved ; and, more fortunate than Æmilia, he was able to return to Syracuse and keep them till they were eighteen. His own child he called Antipholus, and the slave-child he called Dromio ; and, strangely enough, these were the names given to the children who floated away from him.

At the age of eighteen the son who was with Ægeon grew restless with a desire to find his brother. Ægeon let



him depart with his servant, and the young men are henceforth known as Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse.

Left alone, Ægeon found his home too dreary to dwell in, and travelled for five years. He did not, during his

absence, learn all the news of Syracuse, or he would never have gone to Ephesus.

As it was, his melancholy wandering ceased in that town, where he was arrested almost as soon as he arrived. He then found that the Duke of Syracuse had been acting in so tyrannical a manner to Ephesians unlucky enough to fall into his hands, that the Government of Ephesus had angrily passed a law which punished by death or a fine of a thousand pounds any Syracusan who should come to Ephesus. Ægeon was brought before Solinus, Duke of Ephesus, who told him that he must die or pay a thousand pounds before the end of the day.

You will think there was fate in this when I tell you that the children who were kidnapped by the fishermen of Corinth were now citizens of Ephesus, whither they had been brought by

Duke Menaphon, an uncle of Duke Solinus. They will henceforth be called Antipholus of Ephesus and Dromio of Ephesus.

Moreover, on the very day when Ægeon was arrested, Antipholus of Syracuse landed in Ephesus and pretended that he came from Epidamnum in order to avoid a penalty. He handed his money to his servant Dromio of Syracuse, and bade him take it to the Centaur Inn and remain there till he came.

In less than ten minutes he was met on the Mart by Dromio of Ephesus, his brother's slave, and immediately mistook him for his own Dromio. "Why are you back so soon? Where did you leave the money?" asked Antipholus of Syracuse.

This Dromio knew of no money except sixpence, which he had received on the previous Wednesday and given

to the saddler; but he did know that his mistress was annoyed because his master was not in to dinner, and he asked Antipholus of Syracuse to go to a house called The Phoenix without delay. His speech angered the hearer, who would have beaten him if he had not fled. Antipholus of Syracuse then went to The Centaur, found that his gold had been deposited there, and walked out of the inn.

He was wandering about Ephesus when two beautiful ladies signalled to him with their hands. They were sisters, and their names were Adriana and Luciana. Adriana was the wife of his brother Antipholus of Ephesus, and she had made up her mind, from the strange account given her by Dromio of Ephesus, that her husband preferred another woman to his wife. "Ay, you may look as if you did not know me," she said to the man who was really her

brother-in-law, "but I can remember when no words were sweet unless I said them, no meat flavoursome unless I carved it."

"Is it I you address?" said Antipholus of Syracuse stiffly. "I do not know you."

"Fie, brother," said Luciana. "You know perfectly well that she sent Dromio to you to bid you come to dinner"; and Adriana said, "Come, come; I have been made a fool of long enough. My truant husband shall dine with me and confess his silly pranks and be forgiven."

They were determined ladies, and Antipholus of Syracuse grew weary of disputing with them, and followed them obediently to The Phoenix, where a very late "mid-day" dinner awaited them.

They were at dinner when Antipholus of Ephesus and his slave Dromio demanded admittance. "Maud, Bridget,

Marian, Cecily, Gillian, Ginn!" shouted Dromio of Ephesus, who knew all his fellow-servants' names by heart.

From within came the reply, "Fool, dray-horse, coxcomb, idiot!" It was Dromio of Syracuse unconsciously insulting his brother.

Master and man did their best to get in, short of using a crowbar, and finally went away; but Antipholus of Ephesus felt so annoyed with his wife that he decided to give a gold chain which he had promised her, to another woman.

Inside The Phoenix, Luciana, who believed Antipholus of Syracuse to be her sister's husband, attempted, by a discourse in rhyme, when alone with him, to make him kinder to Adriana. In reply he told her that he was not married, but that he loved her so much that, if Luciana were a mermaid, he would gladly lie on the sea if he might feel beneath him her floating golden hair.



Luciana was shocked and left him, and reported his lovemaking to Adriana, who said that her husband was old and ugly, and not fit to be seen or heard, though secretly she was very fond of him.

Antipholus of Syracuse soon received

a visitor in the shape of Angelo the goldsmith, of whom Antipholus of Ephesus had ordered the chain which he had promised his wife and intended to give to another woman.

The goldsmith handed the chain to Antipholus of Syracuse, and treated his "I bespoke it not" as mere fun, so that the puzzled merchant took the chain as good-humouredly as he had partaken of Adriana's dinner. He offered payment, but Angelo foolishly said he would call again.

The consequence was that Angelo was without money when a creditor of the sort that stands no nonsense, threatened him with arrest unless he paid his debt immediately. This creditor had brought a police officer with him, and Angelo was relieved to see Antipholus of Ephesus coming out of the house where he had been dining because he had been locked out of The

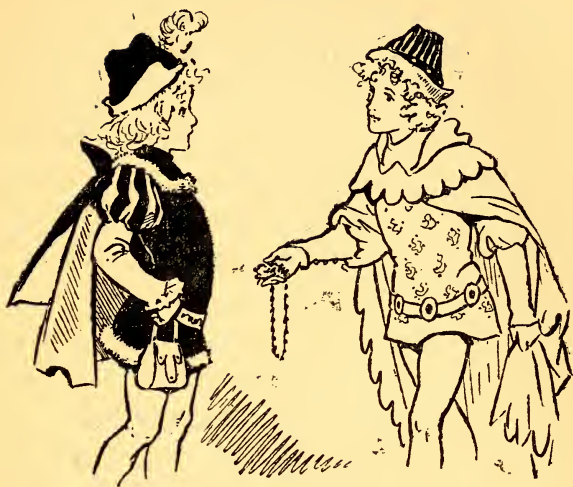
Phoenix. Bitter was Angelo's dismay when Antipholus denied receipt of the chain. Angelo could have sent his mother to prison if she had said that, and he gave Antipholus of Ephesus in charge.

At this moment up came Dromio of Syracuse and told the wrong Antipholus that he had shipped his goods, and that a favourable wind was blowing. To the ears of Antipholus of Ephesus this talk was simple nonsense. He would gladly have beaten the slave, but contented himself with crossly telling him to hurry to Adriana and bid her send to her arrested husband a purse of money which she would find in his desk.

Though Adriana was furious with her husband because she thought he had been making love to her sister, she did not prevent Luciana from getting the purse, and she bade Dromio of Syracuse bring home his master immediately.

Unfortunately, before Dromio could reach the police station he met his real master, who had never been arrested, and did not understand what he meant by offering him a purse. Antipholus of Syracuse was further surprised when a lady whom he did not know asked him for a chain that he had promised her. She was, of course, the lady with whom Antipholus of Ephesus had dined when his brother was occupying his place at table. "Avaunt, thou witch!" was the answer which, to her astonishment, she received.

Meanwhile Antipholus of Ephesus waited vainly for the money which was to have released him. Never a good-tempered man, he was crazy with anger when Dromio of Ephesus, who, of course, had not been instructed to fetch a purse, appeared with nothing more useful than a rope. He beat the slave in the street despite the remonstrance



of the police officer; and his temper did not mend when Adriana, Luciana, and a doctor arrived under the impression that he was mad and must have his pulse felt. He raged so much that men came forward to bind him. But the kindness of Adriana spared him this shame. She promised to pay the sum

demanded of him, and asked the doctor to lead him to The Phoenix.

Angelo's merchant creditor being paid, the two were friendly again, and might soon have been seen chatting before an abbey about the odd behaviour of Antipholus of Ephesus. "Softly," said the merchant at last, "that's he, I think."

It was not; it was Antipholus of Syracuse with his servant Dromio, and he wore Angelo's chain round his neck! The reconciled pair fairly pounced upon him to know what he meant by denying the receipt of the chain he had the impudence to wear. Antipholus of Syracuse lost his temper, and drew his sword, and at that moment Adriana and several others appeared. "Hold!" shouted the careful wife. "Hurt him not; he is mad. Take his sword away. Bind him—and Dromio too."

Dromio of Syracuse did not wish to

be bound, and he said to his master, "Run, master! Into that abbey, quick, or we shall be robbed!"

They accordingly retreated into the abbey.

Adriana, Luciana, and a crowd remained outside, and the Abbess came out, and said, "People, why do you gather here?"

"To fetch my poor distracted husband," replied Adriana.

Angelo and the merchant remarked that they had not known that he was mad.

Adriana then told the Abbess rather too much about her wifely worries, for the Abbess received the idea that Adriana was a shrew, and that if her husband was distracted he had better not return to her for the present.

Adriana determined, therefore, to complain to Duke Solinus, and, lo and behold! a minute afterwards the great

man appeared with officers and two others. The others were Ægeon and the headsman. The thousand marks had not been found, and Ægeon's fate seemed sealed.

Ere the Duke could pass the abbey Adriana knelt before him, and told a woeful tale of a mad husband rushing about stealing jewelry and drawing his sword, adding that the Abbess refused to allow her to lead him home.

The Duke bade the Abbess be summoned, and no sooner had he given the order than a servant from The Phoenix ran to Adriana with the tale that his master had singed off the doctor's beard.

"Nonsense!" said Adriana, "he's in the abbey."

"As sure as I live I speak the truth," said the servant.

Antipholus of Syracuse had not come out of the abbey, before his brother of Ephesus prostrated himself in front of the



ÆMILIA.

Duke, exclaiming, "Justice, most gracious Duke, against that woman." He pointed to Adriana. "She has treated another man like her husband in my own house."

Even while he was speaking Ægeon said, "Unless I am delirious, I see my son Antipholus."

No one noticed him, and Antipholus of Ephesus went on to say how the doctor, whom he called "a threadbare juggler," had been one of a gang who tied him to his slave Dromio, and thrust them into a vault, whence he had escaped by gnawing through his bonds.

The Duke could not understand how the same man who spoke to him was seen to go into the abbey, and he was still wondering when Ægeon asked Antipholus of Ephesus if he was not his son. He replied, "I never saw my father in my life;" but so deceived was

Ægeon by his likeness to the brother whom he had brought up, that he said, "Thou art ashamed to acknowledge me in misery."

Soon, however, the Abbess advanced with Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse.

Then cried Adriana, "I see two husbands or mine eyes deceive me;" and Antipholus, espying his father, said, "Thou art Ægeon or his ghost."

It was a day of surprises, for the Abbess said, "I will free that man by paying his fine, and gain my husband whom I lost. Speak, Ægeon, for I am thy wife Æmilia."

The Duke was touched. "He is free without a fine," he said.

So Ægeon and Æmilia were reunited, and Adriana and her husband reconciled; but no one was happier than Antipholus of Syracuse, who, in the Duke's presence, went to Luciana and said, "I

told you I loved you. Will you be my wife?"

Her answer was given by a look, and therefore is not written.

The two Dromios were glad to think they would receive no more beatings.



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